

MINUTES

The Ad-Hoc Committee on Best Practices in Municipal Decision Making meet at the BPW Board Room at 6 PM on October 23, 2008.

Present were committee members David Narkeicz, Michael Bardsely, Lisa DePiano, Jim Palermo, Alex Ghiselin, Wendy Foxmyn, and Bob Reckman. Members of the public who were present were Ken Mitchell, Linda Heisinger, Susan Enz, Robert Aronson, and Laughlin Zeigler who videotaped the meeting.

The meeting began at 6:00 PM. Susan Enz spoke. Linda Heisinger asked the committee to look at the process of the Board of Public Works around the landfill expansion. Robert Aronson supported her concerns.

The minutes of the meeting of Sept. 25 were amended in a minor way and accepted. They will be posted as amended. Bob noted that the minutes of our Sept. 3 minutes had not been approved. He will circulate them again for approval at our next meeting.

There was a discussion of the committee decision at our last meeting not to have a forum at the Senior Center. Bob talked about why he thought it would have been a good idea. Lisa and Alex talked about the reasons behind that decision to cancel it.

David pointed out that we have 42 days until our report is due to the City Council.

Michael spoke in favor of setting dates tonight for future forums.

Ken Mitchell spoke in favor of better decision making in our City. He had hoped the committee would have done more with specific problems that were identified at the public forum in May. Bob said that he thought we were like a lightning rod. People who are not happy with a wide range of decisions look to us to make them right. That is not within our charge. He expects that our final report will include specific recommendations about steps the City Council might take to better our municipal decision making. Alex spoke about how carefully we had processed the information from the May forum. Linda spoke about the broad need for our committee. Michael said that we had talked about exactly this problem at our last meeting. He thinks that our actual recommendations will generate more public interest and response. He encouraged us to move ahead in drafting our recommendations and distributing them to the public. Ken spoke again about the need for better democracy.

Wendy spoke about need for more public relations outreach. Wendy offered to draft a press release for our next meeting. Michael said that we need to 1) do public relations work, 2) reserve dates and 3) venues and begin to draft the language. Michael, Wendy, Jim and Alex will meet to talk about how to proceed of the recommendations. Their meeting will be posted as a meeting of the full committee so that anyone can attend and contribute. They will meet on Nov. 12 and 24th. Alex and Bob will work on the dates and locations and other publicity.

Jim had to leave at 7:15.

Jesus arrived and suggested that we look 1) at the BPW meeting last night 2) a person who is not a member of a committee serving as it chair, 3) the regionalization of the landfill and 4) the strange amount of overlap in City government. He also thought that the City Council and BPW meetings should have better protocol with respect to the public.

The next meeting will be on November 5 at 6 PM in the Board room of the BPW. Our meeting on Nov. 19 will be at JFK. Alex will reserve a room.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted;

Bob Reckman